

PREPAY MOBILE PHONES

INTRODUCTION

A few months ago, we reviewed 12 of the latest smartphones (*Labs, Shopper* September 2006). These clever devices give you all the functions of a PDA, in the neat shape of a phone. However, they are expensive. Unless you want to pay for a hefty phone contract, you'll need to fork out several hundred pounds to get a basic model. But what if your budget is a little tighter?

This month, we've tested 12 mobile phones that are available in the UK for £200 or less, without a monthly contract to pay. Buying a prepay phone doesn't mean that you have to miss out on the latest technologies, either. Every phone here can send and receive email, surf the web and they all include a camera, while three also have 3G technology. Whatever you need from a phone, we'll help you find the perfect partner.

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TALK TIME

You can now pick up a mobile phone with a camera, email and web access without buying into a costly monthly contract. We put 12 pay-as-you-go mobiles to the test

Choosing a... Prepay Mobile Phone

When choosing a prepay mobile phone, it's vital to check two things. First, you need a phone with all the features that you need. Second, you need to buy it from a network with a tariff that suits the way that you use your telephone.

COUNTING THE COSTS

It's important to have a phone handset that suits you, but even the best mobile phone is of little use if you can't afford to use it. Although heavy phone users are usually best served by buying a monthly contract that includes free minutes and messages, many of the prepay tariffs available can be good value for light users. We've summarised them in our table on page 123, along with advice on how each one would affect different types of users.

Every phone we've tested here is capable of sending and receiving calls and SMS messages. If you're going to carry your phone around all the time, though, you might want it to do a little more. If you want your phone to work as an MP3 player, look for one with a memory card expansion slot so you can add more space for music in future. Our reviews will tell you which phones are nearly as handy as an iPod, and which are less convenient than an eight-track cassette.

Similarly, every phone here has at least one built-in camera. The quality of the pictures they take varies, though. We'll explain which take sharp pictures, and which produce a blurry mess. If you'd like to see for yourself, you'll find a test picture from each phone at www.flickr.com/photos/shoppertestpics.

READ IT AND WEEP

Every phone here allows you to download email and read web pages, but if you want to use the internet on the move regularly, some handsets are better than others.

Most phones in this test use a technology called GPRS for internet access. GPRS is roughly as fast as a dial-up internet connection. The three Vodafone handsets support 3G, which is significantly faster. If you view webpages only occasionally and don't mind waiting a few seconds for them to load, then GPRS will suffice for you. If you regularly surf the web on the move, we recommend a 3G phone.

Every phone in this group bar the Samsung S401i can download messages from a POP3 email account. If you want to regularly read and send emails on the go, check our reviews. We'll explain which handsets make reading and sending messages easy, and which will frustrate you.

SONY ERICSSON V600i

★★★★

£72 inc VAT

Like Nokia's 6223, the Sony Ericsson V600i appears to have been designed back in the 1990s. It's a fairly large handset with an ugly black-and-silver finish that seems designed to collect fingerprints. The back holds a 1.3-megapixel camera, covered by a sliding lens cap. The front contains a single colour screen. It has a reasonably high resolution, but it looks a bit small when surrounded by lots of shiny black plastic.

The V600i is a 3G handset, so like the other two Vodafone products here it can connect to the internet at high speed and make video calls. A large silver button on the right-hand side launches the Vodafone Live! internet service, complete with a superfluous exclamation mark and links to "hip and trendy chat rooms", while one on the opposite side starts a video call. The phone's menus are easy enough to navigate using the small joystick control, but not as neat as those of Sony's W810i.

Downloading email over a 3G connection is quick, and the V600i can fit seven lines of small text on its display. The media player supports MP3 and AAC music. With only 32MB of memory and no memory card slot, though, you might be reduced to listening to Sony's wonderfully named demo tracks, which include "snoogle" and "not late for work". If you want an inexpensive phone for making calls we recommend spending a bit more on the Samsung D500, and if you want 3G it's worth saving up for the Z500.



SUMMARY

- ✓ Cheap
- ✓ Fast 3G connection
- ✗ Chunky and not much memory

MOBILE PHONE GSM 900/1800/1900 and 3G 2100, GPRS and 3G data, 176x220-pixel main display, 1.3-megapixel camera, 32MB internal memory, Bluetooth, IR, USB connectivity
PART CODE V600i
SUPPLIER www.vodafone.co.uk
DETAILS www.sonyericsson.com

VODAFONE 710

★★★★

£72 inc VAT

Vodafone's 710 is the only network-branded handset in this group. Made by Huawei Technologies, it's a small clamshell phone that supports 3G. It has two displays: a fairly large colour screen inside, and a small black and white one outside that shows the date, time and signal.

The 710's number keys and four-way selector are easy to use, but the two soft keys that activate menus and other context-sensitive options are small and fiddly. In the standby screen, one of these gives you direct access to Vodafone's Live! internet service.

The email application displays nine lines of text onscreen, so it's easy to read long emails without too much scrolling. Oddly, though, this was the only phone that could download emails but not successfully connect to our mail server to send a message. The 710 has a 1.3-megapixel camera on the outside, as well as a small secondary camera for video calls. The main camera produced acceptable but unremarkable images in our tests.

The 710 has only 18MB of memory built-in, but you can add more by inserting a memory card. Most phones here support MicroSD cards, but the 710 uses the larger MiniSD format.

If you want a very cheap 3G phone and you want to send emails we recommend Sony's V600i. If you want a cheap phone to make calls and surf the web, the 710 is slightly better. If you don't need 3G, the D500 is superior to both.



SUMMARY

- ✓ Cheap
- ✓ Fast 3G connection
- ✗ Problems sending email

MOBILE PHONE GSM 900/1800/1900 and 3G 2100, GPRS and 3G data, 176x220-pixel main display, 1.3-megapixel camera, 18MB internal memory, Bluetooth connectivity
PART CODE 710 80.00
SUPPLIER www.vodafone.co.uk
DETAILS www.vodafone.co.uk

MOTOROLA Razr V3

★★

£90 inc VAT

The main selling point of Motorola's Razr V3 is its slimness. It's just 14mm thick, and only the LG KG800 Chocolate feels as slim in your pocket. Our review model came with a rather garish pink case, but a more unobtrusive black model is also available.

The V3 has a huge colour screen and an unusual keypad. Rather than individual buttons, the keys are cut from a single metal sheet. This looks strange, and we prefer the feel of proper individual buttons. The display may be big, but it has the same resolution as most other phones in this group: 176x220 pixels. Motorola's menu system frustrated us. Garish and ugly, it makes using the V3 more frustrating to use than any other phone here. When trying to set up the email client to connect to our mail server we kept accidentally leaving the settings menu, losing all the information we'd painstakingly entered. It has just 5MB of memory, and there's no way to add more.

The low-resolution 0.3-megapixel camera produces well-exposed photos, but there's no flash or light for dark scenes. The Opera Mini web browser is far better. It's easy to use and it makes good use of the screen's resolution. The V3 has a USB port, which can be used to charge the phone from a PC. The Razr V3 looks striking, but the Samsung D500 is a much better phone and costs the same.



SUMMARY

- ✓ Decent web browser
- ✗ Annoying menu system
- ✗ Tiny memory

MOBILE PHONE GSM 850/900/1800/1900, GPRS data, 176x220-pixel main display, 0.3-megapixel camera, 5MB internal memory, Bluetooth, USB connectivity
PART CODE RAZR V3
SUPPLIER www.t-mobile.co.uk
DETAILS www.motorola.com

SAMSUNG D500

★★★★★

£90 inc VAT

BUDGET BUY
Samsung's D500 has been around for a while now, but its price has fallen dramatically. It was a good phone when it cost several hundred pounds, and it's now a bargain at just £90. It's a small, slide-open handset with one large colour screen. When in standby this displays the time and date. The sliding action feels smooth, unlike that of the more expensive E370. The main keypad is inside, with menu navigation keys always available on the top of the device. All these buttons are responsive and make typing easy.

The main menu uses nine simple icons, with text submenus. A quick-launch menu allows you to open any messages or access the internet quickly. Sliding open the phone exposes a 1.3-megapixel camera with an LED light. It takes decent pictures, although without the detail of those from Sony's W810i.

The email client works well, but it displays messages in an annoyingly large font so you can't get much on the screen. The web browser, however, is better and uses a smaller font. You can play MP3 or AAC music files, but with 80MB of memory and no memory card slot this phone isn't suited to regular use as an MP3 player. If you want an inexpensive but well-made phone for calls and occasional short emails, this is a great choice.



SUMMARY

- ✓ Very well made
- ✓ Neat sliding action
- ✗ Emails displayed in large font

MOBILE PHONE GSM 900/1800/1900, GPRS data, 176x220-pixel main display, 1.3-megapixel camera, 96MB internal memory, Bluetooth, IR connectivity
PART CODE SGH-D500
SUPPLIER www.orange.co.uk
DETAILS <http://uk.samsungmobile.com>

SAMSUNG S401i

★★

£100 inc VAT

Samsung's S401i is the only i-mode phone in this test. This simplified mobile internet service enables you to browse through web pages quickly and send and receive emails.

The S401i doesn't support the usual POP3 or IMAP email standards. Instead it uses i-mode i-mail. It comes set up with an i-mail account, so you can start to send and receive emails without any fiddling about. It's free to send i-mail messages, although you do have to pay per megabyte of data transferred in the normal way.

At 128x160 pixels, the S401i's main display has one of the lowest resolutions here. It looks acceptable, but the icons and pictures can't compare to those on some cheaper handsets. The handset itself is unusual. It doesn't feel as tough as Samsung's D500 and Z500, but it's significantly better than the flimsy-feeling E370. Its buttons are well designed, and click pleasantly when you push them.

The i-mode internet works well, but if you want high-speed web browsing we'd recommend a 3G phone. More importantly, we were disappointed by the call quality provided by the S401. Our calls stuttered slightly and broke up, and were the worst from any phone in this group.

The S401i is disappointing. It feels fairly well made with a good keyboard, and i-mail is easy to use. Unfortunately its low-resolution screen and poor call quality are reason enough to avoid it.



SUMMARY

- ✓ I-mail is simple to use
- ✗ Low-resolution display
- ✗ Imperfect call quality

MOBILE PHONE GSM 900/1800/1900, GPRS data, 128x160-pixel main display, 0.3-megapixel camera, 25MB internal memory, Bluetooth connectivity
PART CODE SGH-S401i
SUPPLIER www.o2.co.uk
DETAILS <http://uk.samsungmobile.com>

SAMSUNG E370

★★

£130 inc VAT

Like the D500 and LG KG800, Samsung's E370 is a slide-open phone. Unlike the D500 and KG800, though, it feels a little flimsy when you open it. More alarmingly, the whole phone vibrates when playing sounds through its speaker. The keypad layout is identical to Samsung's D500, but unlike the D500 this phone is so light that you can feel each key click through the phone as you hold it in your hand. We tested the Three Lions Special Edition, which has the England football team emblem on the back, although a plain version is available for those who dislike football (or England).

The E370's display has a resolution of 128x160 pixels, one of the lowest in the group. However, its menus are clearly designed and easy to use. Sliding open the phone reveals a 1.3-megapixel camera with a light. It isn't as sharp as the Sony Ericsson W810i, but our judges were impressed by the accurate colours in its photos. The E370 can play MP3 and AAC music files, although with 40MB of internal memory and no memory card slot you won't be able to store more than one album at a time.

At £130, the E370 is only a little cheaper than the Z500, which has a better screen and 3G. Similarly it's not as good as the D500, which costs £40 less and feels far more robust. Unless your first priority is to find a phone that celebrates the England football team, there's just no reason to choose this.



SUMMARY

- ✓ Accurate colours in photos
- ✗ Low-resolution display
- ✗ Emails displayed in large font

MOBILE PHONE GSM 900/1800/1900, GPRS and EDGE data, 128x160-pixel main display, 1.3-megapixel camera, 40MB internal memory, Bluetooth connectivity
PART CODE SGH-E370
SUPPLIER www.t-mobile.co.uk
DETAILS <http://uk.samsungmobile.com>

SAMSUNG Z500

★★★★★

£135 inc VAT

The Z500 is significantly cheaper than the E870, but it has a well-made flip. It supports 3G technology, so it can do a few things that are out of the reach of most phones here. It can make video calls to other 3G phones, and it can use 3G's data transfer systems to retrieve webpages and emails faster than a standard GPRS handset. This relies on you being in a 3G area, though. You can see which areas are covered at www.vodafone.co.uk/ukcoverage.

The Z500 has a bright colour screen inside and a colour OLED screen that displays standby information on the outside. The 1-megapixel camera takes reasonable photos, but pushing the photo button on the side of the phone switches to the small secondary camera rather than taking a picture. More annoyingly, the camera keeps reverting to a resolution of 640x480. 3G allows you to download emails quickly, but as with many Samsung phones they're displayed in an annoyingly large font that squanders the screen's resolution. Surfing the web is easy and far faster than when using a GPRS connection. The Z500 can play MP3 and AAC music, and you can add more memory using MiniSD cards.

If you're looking for a phone to use as a camera or music player then it's worth spending more on the Sony Ericsson W810i, but if you mainly want to surf the internet then this is a great buy.



SUMMARY

- ✓ Fast 3G connection
- ✓ Sturdy flip design
- ✗ Emails displayed in large font

MOBILE PHONE GSM 900/1800/1900 and 3G 2100, GPRS and 3G data, 176x220-pixel main display, 1.0-megapixel camera, 50MB internal memory, Bluetooth, IR connectivity
PART CODE SGH-Z500v
SUPPLIER www.vodafone.co.uk
DETAILS <http://uk.samsungmobile.com>

LG KG800 Chocolate

★★★★★

£150 inc VAT

We're not quite sure what possessed LG to name the KG800 'Chocolate', but it is easily the best-looking phone in this test. It's shiny, black and has a superb slide-open action. There are no buttons on the outside of the handset; instead, the front surface doubles as six touch-sensitive controls. Red icons indicate what pushing each area will do. This looks great, but it's not as easy to use as normal navigation buttons. You can use the excellent number pad to select most options once you've started the menu system, though.

The KG800 has one large colour screen. Its menus are simply designed, and far less garish than those of many other phones here. It has a 1.3-megapixel camera with an LED light for taking pictures in darkness. It's particularly easy to get photos on to your computer, as the KG800 works as a USB mass storage device. You can plug it into any PC without installing drivers and copy the photos to your hard disk. This is an excellent idea, but it would work even better if the KG800 used a standard USB cable.

The KG800 plays MP3, WMA and AAC music files, and its headset includes a remote control. Its 128MB of internal memory is the most in this test, but with no memory card slot you couldn't upgrade it to hold more music. This is an excellent, stylish phone, but Sony's W810i has a better camera and music player.



SUMMARY

- ✓ Looks fantastic
- ✓ Easy to transfer pictures to a PC
- ✗ No memory card slot

MOBILE PHONE GSM 900/1800/1900, GPRS and EDGE data, 176x220-pixel main display, 1.3-megapixel camera, 128MB internal memory, Bluetooth, USB connectivity
PART CODE KG800
SUPPLIER www.orange.co.uk
DETAILS <http://uk.lgmobile.com>

NOKIA 6131

★★★★

£150 inc VAT

Unlike most Nokia handsets, which use the standard phone shape or slide open, the 6131 has a flip-open clamshell design. More unusually, you don't have to flip it open manually to access the screen and buttons. Instead, you push the large button at the top and the phone unfolds itself. This sounds neat, but in use it doesn't feel that great. The rest of the phone feels curious, too, with a rubbery back and a nasty, single four-way key made of hard, shiny plastic that activates the menus. The number pad buttons also feel plasticky.

This rather unpleasant tactile experience is a shame, because the 6131 has some impressive features. Most noticeable is its large colour screen, which has a high resolution of 320x240 pixels. It's bright, clear and easy to use, and there's a second colour screen on the outside. The menu system is neat and simple to use, too. Having a high-resolution display makes browsing the web easy, while the email client is able to display lots of text.

The 6131 has a 1.3-megapixel camera, but no flash for taking pictures in low light. It does, however, produce acceptable pictures. You can play music files, but with only 11MB of memory included as standard you won't be able to listen to more than a few songs without adding a MicroSD memory card. Overall, the 6131 is an average phone; its excellent screen is balanced out by the poor buttons and strange rubbery case.

T-Mobile



SUMMARY

- ✓ Large, high-resolution screen
- ✗ Rubbery case; strange flip action
- ✗ Hard, plasticky keys

MOBILE PHONE GSM 850/900/1800/1900, GPRS and EDGE data, 320x240-pixel main display, 1.3-megapixel camera, 11MB internal memory, Bluetooth, IR connectivity
PART CODE 6131
SUPPLIER www.t-mobile.co.uk
DETAILS www.nokia.co.uk

SONY ERICSSON W810i

★★★★★

£160 inc VAT



Sony Ericsson's W810i is the best phone in the group if you want to play music, and the best for taking photos.

It's available on T-Mobile as well as Orange. The headphones included are Sony's excellent ear-plug type, and when you turn on the phone you can choose to start it as a phone or simply to load the music player. Unlike LG's KG800 it has no full remote control, but dedicated play/pause and volume controls on its side make it easy to control music from your pocket.

The W810 has small but firm buttons, and a simple five-way navigation system. The menus are clear and easy to use, and the orange Walkman key takes you directly to the music player. Sony includes software for transferring songs to the phone and a USB data cable. The camera on the back of the phone is one of only two 2-megapixel cameras in the group, and the only one with auto-focus. It also took the best photos in the group, with decent exposure, good focus and plenty of detail. The 512MB Memory Stick Pro Duo card gives you plenty of space for photos or music.

Even if you don't use the camera or music player, the W810i is a good phone. Its email client works well and can display a reasonable amount of text on screen. The handset also feels sturdy. It's not as pretty as LG's KG800, but if you want a phone that can do more than just make and receive calls, this is the one to buy.

orange



SUMMARY

- ✓ Excellent music player
- ✓ Auto-focus camera
- ✓ Excellent as a phone

MOBILE PHONE GSM 850/900/1800/1900, GPRS and EDGE data, 176x220-pixel main display, 2-megapixel camera, 20MB internal memory, Bluetooth, IR, USB connectivity
PART CODE W810i
SUPPLIER www.orange.co.uk
DETAILS www.sonyericsson.com

SAMSUNG E870

★★★★★

£180 inc VAT

Samsung's E870 has a slim, modern design. The one we tested was made of bright white plastic with a metallic silver cover, but red and black versions are also available. It's a flip-open clamshell design with two screens. As well as a large, bright colour screen inside, a small organic LED (OLED) display on the outside shows the time, signal, battery and incoming calls.

Samsung's menus are a little too colourful for our liking, but they're easy to use. More importantly, the phone responds quickly to button pushes, so you always feel in control. The E870 has a simple email client, and can play MP3, WMA and AAC music files. The 80MB of internal memory will hold a few tracks, but you'll need to add a MicroSD card to store more than an album or two.

The 1.3-megapixel camera takes reasonable pictures, and has an LED light for illuminating dark scenes. You can also take self-portraits using the external screen as a viewfinder. The web browser uses a very small font for some pages, allowing you to get a lot of text onscreen.

The E870 is light, and doesn't feel as tough as Samsung's own Z500. It's also expensive, considering that it doesn't include an auto-focus camera or 3G. It's a good-looking phone that's easy to use, but you're paying for style over substance.

O2



SUMMARY

- ✓ Responsive, simple interface
- ✓ Neat design
- ✗ A little expensive

MOBILE PHONE GSM 900/1800/1900, GPRS and EDGE data, 176x220-pixel main display, 1.3-megapixel camera, 80MB internal memory, Bluetooth connectivity
PART CODE SGH-E870
SUPPLIER www.o2.co.uk
DETAILS <http://uk.samsungmobile.com>

NOKIA 6233

★★★★

£200 inc VAT

Nokia's 6233 is the most expensive phone in this test. Initially, it's hard to see why. Its chunky design reminded us of when mobile phones were large, and although it supports a form of 3G you can't use this for fast downloads or video calls. Its keypad is frustrating, with an oddly squishy feel.

The 6233 becomes more appealing once you turn it on. Its display has a resolution of 240x320 pixels and is very bright. Nokia's Series 40 interface is uncluttered and easy to use, with a simple main menu. The email client is easy to set up.

The camera can take 2-megapixel images, but the results were unimpressive. Photos looked overexposed, and grain was clearly visible in high-resolution shots. There's no flash or LED for illuminating dark scenes, either. The 6MB of internal memory doesn't give you room for many photos, but a 64MB MicroSD card is included.

The 6233 supports WCDMA, which is a 3G technology. Annoyingly, though, this doesn't allow it to do any of the clever things associated with 3G phones such as make video phone calls or surf the web at high speed.

Overall, the 6233 is disappointing. At £100, it would be easy to forgive the squishy buttons and lacklustre camera, but it's wildly overpriced at £200. If you like Nokia's simple menus and want a high-resolution screen, the 6131 is £50 cheaper.

O2



SUMMARY

- ✓ High-resolution screen
- ✗ Expensive
- ✗ Squishy keys

MOBILE PHONE GSM 900/1800/1900, WCDMA 2100, GPRS, EDGE data, 240x320-pixel main display, 2-megapixel camera, 6MB internal memory, Bluetooth, IR connectivity
PART CODE 6233
SUPPLIER www.o2.co.uk
DETAILS www.nokia.co.uk

The cost of prepay Price plans examined

In some respects, the price plans available for prepay mobile users have become simpler over the past ten years or so. All of the four major networks now offer at least one plan with no difference between peak and off-peak call charges. On the other hand, the numerous discounts and add-on packages can make it very difficult to calculate the costs associated with each plan. Your monthly costs may even fluctuate significantly while your usage remains constant: by spending a lot one month, you can earn a significant discount on charges for the next month.

The only way to work out exactly which tariff is best for you is to make a list of the calls and messages you send in a typical month, then calculate a cost for each plan using the charges in our table, below. One factor that could make a huge difference is

the mobile networks used by your friends and family. In many price plans there's a significant difference between the cost of calling someone on the same mobile network, and calling someone on a rival service.

TEXTING TIMES

If you make relatively few calls but send lots of SMS text messages, there are several price plans designed for you. Orange's Free Text Top Up gives you 300 free messages if you credit £10 per month, and T-Mobile's Text Appeal charges all SMS messages at 3p each. These plans aren't great for compulsive chatterboxes, though, as calls to other networks are expensive. If you make a lot of calls to people on different mobile networks, T-Mobile's Everyone and Vodafone's Anynet tariffs have relatively low cross-network call charges.

If you plan to use your mobile phone for email and surfing the web, pay careful attention to the price of GPRS data. Most networks charge for this by the megabyte, with the cheapest being O₂ at £3 per megabyte downloaded.

T-Mobile's data prices are unusual. Downloading information costs 73p per kilobyte, but charges are capped at £1 per day, which is ideal for an infrequent but heavy user. If you use Vodafone, access to any of the Vodafone Live! pages is free, so you only start to incur charges if you send an email or browse to an external website.

If you use mobile internet access very regularly, it might be cheaper to buy a phone on a cheap contract using a service such as T-Mobile's Web 'n' walk (see *What's New*, page 39). This gives you unlimited mobile data for a fixed fee of £7.50 per month.



TARIFF	ORANGE	ORANGE	T-MOBILE	T-MOBILE	T-MOBILE
	Free Text Top-up	Any Time Fixed Rates	Everyone	Mates Rates	Text Appeal
SAME NETWORK					
Call cost (peak/off peak)	20p	10p	12p	5p	20p
SMS	10p	10p	10p	5p	3p
MMS	30p	30p	20p	20p	20p
OTHER MOBILE NETWORK					
Call cost (peak/off peak)	40p	35p	12p	40p	40p
SMS	10p	10p	10p	10p	3p
MMS	30p	30p	20p	20p	20p
LANDLINE					
Call cost (peak/off peak)	20p	25p	12p	20p	20p
DATA					
Data cost	£4/MB	£4/MB	£0.73/KB, capped £1/day	£0.73/KB, capped £1/day	£0.73/KB, capped £1/day
PROMOTIONS					
Free calls	Orange mobiles 7pm-11.59pm	None	None	None	None
Bonus for £10 per month	300 SMS, 1MB Data	£1 and free calls Orange mobiles 7pm-11.59pm or 50 SMS	Free evening/weekend SMS	Free evening/weekend SMS	Free evening/weekend SMS
Bonus for £25 per month	600 SMS, 1MB Data	£4 and free calls Orange mobiles 7pm-11.59pm or 200 SMS	20% of top-up as credit	20% of top-up as credit	20% of top-up as credit
Other	None	None	None	None	None



TARIFF	VODAFONE	VODAFONE	O ₂	O ₂	O ₂
	Anynet	Anytime	Talkalot	Talkalotmore	Original
SAME NETWORK					
Call cost (peak/off peak)	30p/10p	30p for first 3 minutes then 10p	25p for first 3 minutes then 5p	25p for first 3 minutes then 5p	20p/10p
SMS	10p	10p	10p	10p	12p
MMS	36p	36p	25p	25p	25p
OTHER MOBILE NETWORK					
Call cost (peak/off peak)	30p/10p	30p for first 3 minutes then 10p	40p	40p	50p/30p
SMS	10p	10p	10p	10p	12p
MMS	36p	36p	25p	25p	25p
LANDLINE					
Call cost (peak/off peak)	30p/10p	30p for first 3 minutes then 10p	25p for first 3 minutes then 5p	25p for first 3 minutes then 5p	35p/10p
DATA					
Data cost	£7.50/MB (Live! pages free)	£7.50/MB (Live! pages free)	£3/MB	£3/MB	£3
PROMOTIONS					
Free calls	None	None	None	None	None
Bonus for £10 per month	None	None	None	None	None
Bonus for £25 per month	None	None	None	150 off-peak minutes	None
Other	Free weekend calls if £5 spent during the week, text bundles available	Free weekend calls if £5 spent during the week, text bundles available	Various "bolt-on" packs available	Various "bolt-on" packs available	Various "bolt-on" packs available

PREPAY MOBILE PHONES

BUDGET BUY						
MANUFACTURER	LG	MOTOROLA	NOKIA	NOKIA	SAMSUNG	SAMSUNG
Model	KG800 Chocolate	Razr V3	6131	6233	D500	E370
Rating	★★★★	★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★
HARDWARE						
Main display	2", 176x220	2.2", 176x220	2.2", 320x240	2.0", 240x320	1.9", 176x220	1.6", 128x160
Second display	No	Colour	Colour	No	No	No
Camera	1.3-megapixel	0.3-megapixel	1.3-megapixel	2-megapixel	1.3-megapixel	1.3-megapixel
Flash	LED	No	No	No	LED	LED
Connectivity	Bluetooth, USB	Bluetooth, USB	Bluetooth, IR	Bluetooth, IR	Bluetooth, IR	Bluetooth
Internal memory	128MB	5MB	11MB	6MB	96MB	40MB
Memory card slot (supplied)	N/A (0MB)	N/A (0MB)	MicroSD (0MB)	MicroSD (64MB)	N/A (0MB)	N/A (0MB)
Operating frequencies	GSM 900/1800/1900	GSM 850/900/1800/1900	GSM 850/900/1800/1900	GSM 900/1800/1900, WCDMA 2100	GSM 900/1800/1900	GSM 900/1800/1900
Wireless data	GPRS, EDGE	GPRS	GPRS, EDGE	GPRS, EDGE	GPRS	GPRS, EDGE
Size	95x48x15mm	53x98x14mm	92x48x20mm	108x46x18mm	94x46x24mm	86x43x20mm
Weight	83g	95g	112g	110g	99g	89g
FEATURES						
Email client	POP3	POP3/IMAP	POP3/IMAP	POP3/IMAP	POP3/IMAP	POP3/IMAP
Audio playback formats	MP3/WMA/AAC	MP3	MP3, MP4, AAC	MP3/MP4/AAC	MP3/AAC	MP3/AAC
FM radio	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Web browser	Proprietary	Opera Mini	Proprietary	Proprietary	Proprietary	Proprietary
Accessories included	Headset, remote control, pouch, strap, data cable	Mono headset, data cable	Headset	Headset	Headset, strap	Headset
Talk time	3.5 hours	7 hours	3.4 hours	4 hours	6.5 hours	7.5 hours
Standby time	8 days	12 days	10 days	14 days	12.5 days	13 days
BUYING INFORMATION						
Pay-as-you-go price (inc VAT)	£150	£90	£150	£200	£90	£130
Supplier	www.orange.co.uk	www.t-mobile.co.uk	www.t-mobile.co.uk	www.o2.co.uk	www.orange.co.uk	www.t-mobile.co.uk
Handset details	http://uk.lgmobile.com	www.motorola.com	www.nokia.co.uk	www.nokia.co.uk	http://uk.samsungmobile.com	http://uk.samsungmobile.com
Part code	KG800	RAZR V3	6131	6233	SGH-D500	SGH-E370

BUDGET BUY						
MANUFACTURER	SAMSUNG	SAMSUNG	SAMSUNG	SONY ERICSSON	SONY ERICSSON	VODAFONE
Model	E870	S401i	Z500	V600i	W810i	710
Rating	★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★
HARDWARE						
Main display	1.9", 176x220	1.8", 128x160	1.8", 176x220	1.7", 176x220	1.9", 176x220	2", 176x220
Second display	Colour	Colour	Colour	No	No	Mono
Camera	1.3-megapixel	0.3-megapixel	1-megapixel	1.3-megapixel	2-megapixel	1.3-megapixel
Flash	LED	No	No	LED	LED	LED
Connectivity	Bluetooth	Bluetooth	Bluetooth, IR	Bluetooth, IR, USB	Bluetooth, IR, USB	Bluetooth
Internal memory	80MB	25MB	50MB	32MB	20MB	18MB
Memory card slot (supplied)	MicroSD (0MB)	N/A (0MB)	MicroSD (0MB)	N/A (0MB)	Memory Stick Pro Duo (512MB)	MiniSD (0MB)
Operating frequencies	GSM 900/1800/1900	GSM 900/1800/1900	GSM 900/1800/1900, 3G 2100	GSM 900/1800/1900, 3G 2100	GSM 850/900/1800/1900	GSM 900/1800/1900, 3G 2100
Wireless data	GPRS, EDGE	GPRS	GPRS, 3G	GPRS, 3G	GPRS, EDGE	GPRS, 3G
Size	92x42x17mm	88x44x20mm	89x45x25mm	104x45x19mm	100x46x20mm	91x46x24mm
Weight	83g	75g	95g	102g	99g	99g
FEATURES						
Email client	POP3/IMAP	i-mode	POP3/IMAP	POP3/IMAP	POP3/IMAP	POP3/IMAP
Audio playback formats	MP3/WMA/AAC	MP3	MP3/AAC	MP3/AAC	MP3/AAC	MP3
FM radio	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Web browser	Proprietary	Proprietary	Proprietary	Proprietary	Proprietary	Proprietary
Accessories included	Headset, strap	N/A	N/A	Headset, data cable	Headset, data cable, memory card adapter	Headset
Talk time	3 hours	4 hours	4 hours	8 hours	8 hours	3.2 hours
Standby time	12 days	7.5 days	8 days	15 days	14.5 days	12.5 days
BUYING INFORMATION						
Pay-as-you-go price (inc VAT)	£180	£100	£135	£72	£160	£72
Supplier	www.o2.co.uk	www.o2.co.uk	www.vodafone.co.uk	www.vodafone.co.uk	www.orange.co.uk	www.vodafone.co.uk
Handset details	http://uk.samsungmobile.com	http://uk.samsungmobile.com	http://uk.samsungmobile.com	www.sonyericsson.com	www.sonyericsson.com	www.vodafone.co.uk
Part code	SGH-E870	SGH-S401i	SGH-Z500v	V600i	W810i	710 80.00

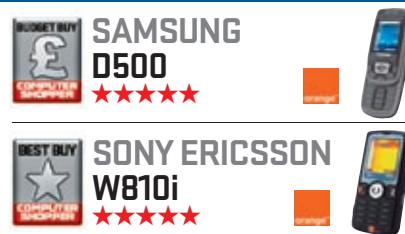
Labs verdict Prepay mobile phones

We were impressed by the range of phones submitted for this group test. Whether you want a small handset that will only ever be used for making and receiving calls, one that doubles as a decent digital camera and music player or a tool for downloading email on the go, you'll find the perfect phone here.

If you want an inexpensive phone for calling and sending text messages, we recommend Orange's Samsung D500. It's small and easy to use, and it outclasses phones that cost significantly more. At just £90 it's a bargain, and our Budget Buy.

If you regularly want to surf the web from your phone and you live in a 3G area, it's worth picking a 3G handset. The best of the bunch is Vodafone's Samsung Z500. It's a neat clamshell phone that feels robust and can download and display web pages quickly. It can download emails, too, but it's a shame that it displays them in such a large font.

Finally, if you want a phone that can do everything, we recommend the Sony Ericsson W810i. Available on Orange and T-mobile, it has a great autofocus camera and a handy music player with 512MB of memory. It's



also a great way to download and send email, and at £160 it's good value. It's our Best Buy. **CS**